DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 251 940 EA 017 334

AUTHOR Brent, Daniel; Jurkowitz, Carolyn
TITLE School Board Study Programs: Board Member's Manual Series II.
INSTITUTION National Catholic Educational Association, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE 84
NOTE 59p.; For a related document, see ED 240 673.
AVAILABLE FROM Publication Sales, National Catholic Educational Association, Suite 100, 1077 30th Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20007 ($5.00 prepaid, member discounts).
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Board Administrator Relationship; *Boards of Education; *Catholic Schools; Elementary Secondary Education; Governing Boards; Leadership Training; *Organizational Development; Participative Decision Making; Policy Formation

ABSTRACT

A series of study lessons are presented for Catholic school board members who formulate policies for Catholic educational programs. The format is designed around 15 to 20 minutes of group study built into the regular board meeting agenda. Each lesson is designed as an independent unit on a single topic or skill, and each is divided into three parts: a preliminary study section, a group learning activity to take place at the meeting, and a brief followup reading or activity for individual members to do after the meeting. Lessons are on the following topics: (1) board's "calendar" of responsibilities; (2) board committees; (3) policy development; (4) the school as Catholic; (5) long range planning; (6) board prayer; (7) evaluation of the principal; and (8) board accountability. Leader's notes at the end of the document provide directions for moving the group through each lesson. (TE)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED251940

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

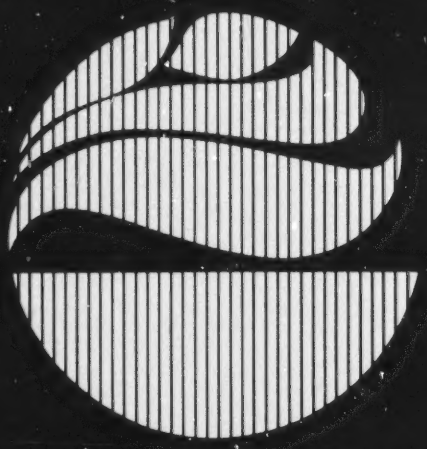
P. Kokus

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

SCHOOL BOARD STUDY PROGRAMS

Board Member's Manual

Series II



NATIONAL CATHOLIC EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION

EA 017 334

SCHOOL BOARD STUDY PROGRAMS

Board Member's Manual Series II

A series of study lessons for
Catholic school board members
who formulate policies for
Catholic educational programs

prepared by

Daniel Brent

and

Carolyn Jurkowitz

for

The National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA)

© NCEA 1984

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 2

Lesson 1. BOARD'S "CALENDAR" OF RESPONSIBILITIES 4
The purpose of this lesson is to sharpen board members' understanding of the board's responsibilities and to help them be more effective in pursuing those tasks.

Lesson 2. BOARD COMMITTEES 10
The purpose of this lesson is to give board members insight into the theory and practice of constructive use of board committees.

Lesson 3. POLICY DEVELOPMENT 16
The purpose of this lesson is to give board members an understanding of how board policy should be developed.

Lesson 4. THE SCHOOL AS CATHOLIC 20
The purpose of this lesson is to give board members some understanding of the components that help to make a school unique as a *Catholic* school.

Lesson 5. LONG RANGE PLANNING 25
The purpose of this lesson is to provide the board with an understanding of "long range planning" and a process for undertaking it.

Lesson 6. BOARD PRAYER 31
The purpose of this lesson is to highlight the importance of prayer in the board's life and to offer some ideas for boar prayer.

Lesson 7. EVALUATION OF THE PRINCIPAL 36
The purpose of this lesson is to familiarize board members with the purpose, potential value, and limitations of their evaluation of the principal.

Lesson 8. BOARD ACCOUNTABILITY 42
The purpose of this lesson is to raise the consciousness of board members regarding their responsibility to be accountable to the constituents whom they serve.

Leader's Notes 46-55

INTRODUCTION

School boards make it possible for parents and other members of the parish community to have a voice in decisions that are made about the parish school and to contribute their ideas and their talents to the work of the school's administration. These school boards for Catholic schools represent an exciting development in Catholic education in this country. Our boards are relatively new—at least this generation of boards is new. They began to develop about 20 years ago with the pioneering work of Monsignor O'Neil D'Amour and they predated the emergence of the parish council after Vatican II.

During that time, they have grown and matured to the point where it is a rare Catholic school principal who does not have the support and counsel of a school board or education committee. Since the service represented by these school boards involves so many people each year, it becomes a responsibility of the schools and boards to provide the board members with help to do their job effectively.

This set of materials (and its companion set in Series I) was developed to do that. The format is designed around 15 to 20 minutes of group study built into the regular board meeting agenda. Each lesson has three parts: a preliminary study section to be read by each board member before the meeting (Section A), a group learning activity to take place at the meeting (Section B), and a brief follow-up reading or activity for individual members to do after the meeting (Section C). Each lesson is on a single topic or skill; taken together over the course of a year they constitute a substantial inservice program.

Each lesson is designed as a independent unit. The order of the lessons can be rearranged to suit the needs or preferences of an individual board; a lesson can be omitted if the board does not need it or is not interested in it. Some of the lessons raise issues or suggest projects which a board may wish to return to as agenda items in subsequent meetings. Never is this required by the study material itself.

The lessons are self-teaching. They can be led by the board president, the principal, or any person (whether on the board or not) who is willing to perform this function. The Leader's Notes for each lesson provide directions for moving the group through the lesson. This requires no special knowledge or training—either in board theory or in group process.

Target Audience

These lessons and the lessons contained in Series I were written for Catholic school boards. Series I follows this same format but focuses on eight different in-service topics. Groups other than Catholic school boards—education committees, for example—may be able to generalize from this material but will find the examples all school oriented. Therefore, we would not encourage use of the material by groups other than school boards without the help of a qualified leader.

The Authors

Daniel Brent, the principal author, is Superintendent of Schools for the Diocese of Columbus. He was previously Superintendent of Schools for the Diocese of Rochester and Director of School Planning for Columbus. In addition to his work with boards in Columbus, he has addressed the National Association of Boards of Education at the

NCEA meetings in Chicago (1982), Washington (1983) and Boston (1984). He has also addressed the Mid-South Catholic Educational Leadership Conference (1981) on the Catholic school board topic.

Carolyn Jurkowitz is Assistant Superintendent of Schools for the Diocese of Columbus. She was previously a Catholic school teacher and administrator in St. Louis and Erie. Dr. Jurkowitz has given numerous orientations and workshops for board members in the Diocese of Columbus and addressed the 1984 NABE convention in Boston.

Recent Church Documents on Catholic Education

The Catholic School. Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1977.

Declaration on Christian Education. In *The Documents of Vatican II,* pp. 637-51. Edited by Walter M. Abbott. New York: The American Press, 1966.

General Catechetical Directory. Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1971.

Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith. In *Origins* 12, 30 December, 1982.

Sharing the Light of Faith: The National Catechetical Directory for Catholics of the United States. Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1979.

Teach Them. Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1976.

To Teach as Jesus Did. Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1972.

General References for Catholic School Boards

Harper, Mary-Angela. *Ascent to Excellence in Catholic Education.* Waterford, CT: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1979.

Keating, Charles J. *Pastoral Planning Book.* New York: Paulist Press, 1981.

McKinney, Mary Benet. *An In-Service program for Catholic Education Boards.* Washington, D.C.: National Association of Boards of Education/NCEA, n.d. Eight cassette tapes, individually titled; also includes a bibliography.

PolicyMaker. Washington, D.C.: National Association of Boards of Education. A quarterly publication of the NABE of the National Catholic Educational Association.

Lesson 1
BOARD'S "CALENDAR" OF RESPONSIBILITIES

The purpose of this lesson is to sharpen board members' understanding of the board's responsibilities and to help them be more effective in pursuing those tasks.

For Leaders Notes, see page 46.

SECTION A
Calendar of Activities

Here are nine categories of activity that should, over the course of the year, occupy the board's calendar. If a board is active in all or most of these categories, then the members can be reasonably sure that they are busy with the right things. (It's still possible to do them poorly; the board's evaluation of its own activity should help to gauge that!)

1. Planning. The board should be looking ahead to the school's needs and how they will be addressed. If the board is doing this, its agendas will reflect these kinds of activities:

- Assessing the school's needs; listening to parents, teachers, students, administration as they outline needs.
- Setting goals; deciding what the board will do to achieve them.
- Developing, revising, or "tracking" a long range school plan.

2. Policymaking. The board should be adopting policies as appropriate to meet school needs. Here are agenda "symptoms" that this is happening:

- Identifying policy needs.
- Receiving and reading policy drafts ("first reading") and discussing and adopting policies ("second reading").
- Monitoring whether board policies are working effectively.
- Reviewing existing policies as they "age"—still useful?

3. Finances. The board should be adopting the school's financial plan and monitoring how it's working. This will involve meeting time spent on:

- Approving the school's budget with revisions adopted by the board.
- Critiquing and approving the budgets of other major school organizations like the Home-School Organization or the Boosters Club.
- Determining tuition rates and fees.
- Determining salary and benefit schedules for the school's staff.
- Dialoguing with pastor (or parish council finance committee) regarding the amount of parish subsidy for the school.
- Regularly reviewing the school's financial statements.

4. Projects. The board spends time pursuing whatever special activities it has taken on. This will involve agenda attention to items like these:

- Commitments the board made when it did its planning and goalsetting.
- Recruitment of students.

- Participation in the evaluation of the school and its programs.
- Public relations activities.
- Activities to support the teachers' work or morale.
- Supplementary fund-raising
- Negotiations with teachers.

5. Evaluation of the principal. This may take place each year or less frequently. When it does occur, it involves board activities such as:

- Reviewing the principal's service to the board; offering suggestions.
- Contributing to a diocesan evaluation of the principal or to the principal's self evaluation by offering information on the principal's service to parents and to the board by way of leadership.

6. Board's self evaluation. The board should be checking on its own performance periodically. "Symptoms" that this is happening will appear by:

- Tracking the goals and objectives set by the board in planning.
- Reviewing the effectiveness of its policies.
- Doing an annual review of the board's peformance. The board may choose to solicit the input of others (principal, pastor, some parents, faculty) as part of this review.

7. Information sharing. The board needs to be receiving information about the school to do its job and make its decisions in an informed manner. The board also communicates with its constituents and public. Here are some things that show this is happening:

- Reports are received from the principal and from board committees.
- School staff gives input to the board.
- Parents speak to the board and are surveyed about the school's needs.
- Dialogue takes place with the diocesan school board or commission.
- Board agendas and activities are publicized to the parents/parish.
- Pastor is kept informed of board activities and concerns.

8. Consultation. The board responds to questions and issues brought to it by the principal or pastor. Board energy then gets used for:

- Responding to the principal's (or pastor's) requests for advice.
- Providing members for special committees formed by the principal.

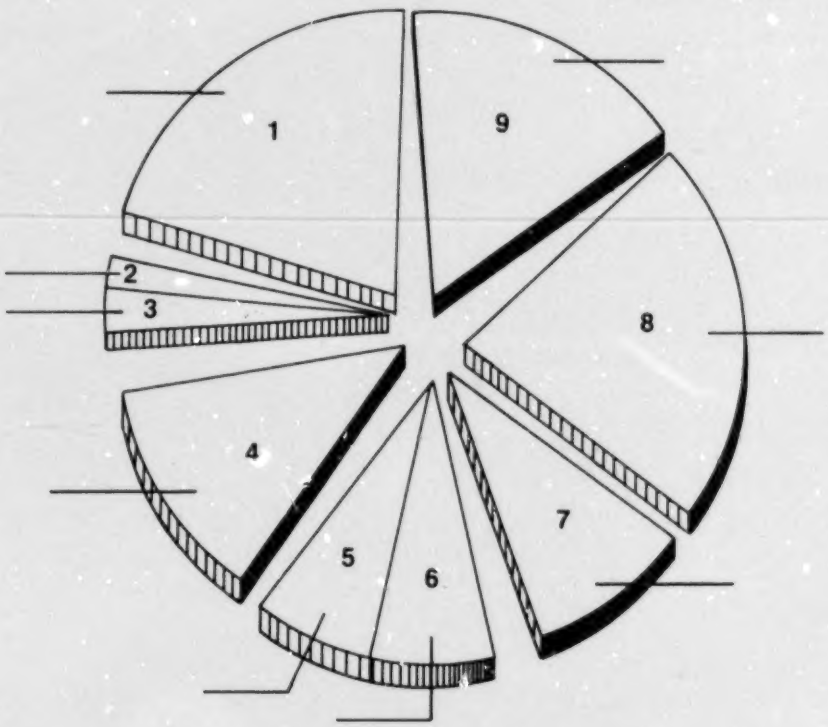
9. Internal life of the board. The board must provide for its own operation. These kinds of things will be happening in a healthy board:

- Candidates for board membership will be recruited and election (or selection) of members and officers will take place.
- Orientation will be given to new members.
- Inservice study will be shared by all members.
- Agenda planning will take place in some systematic way.
- Committee life will be provided for.
- Minutes of the meetings will be officially recorded and approved.
- Constitution will be reviewed and updated as necessary.
- The board will spend time praying together.

Some of these activities will occupy more of the board's time than others and, even if a board does not deal with all of these ares of activity, it may still be a very effective board. It is good, however, to know where the "holes" are in the board's performance so that those omissions don't occur simply by oversight.

SECTION B
Time Allocation of Board Functions

BOARD TIME ALLOCATION



BOARD FUNCTIONS

A. Planning
B. Policy development
C. Finances
D. Projects
E. Evaluation of the principal
F. Board's self evaluation
G. Information sharing
H. Consultation
I. Internal board life

If your board received the correspondence below, how would you expect the board functions (A-I) to be matched with the amount of time spent on each one (1-9)? For example, if you spent little or no time on evaulation of the principal, "E" would go on the line next to segment 2.

"Dear Board President:

"As you know, our firm was retained by your board to document the board's activities during this past year. After reviewing your organization's minutes and listening to the tapes of your meetings, we are pleased to submit this report. It has been put into a graph format to give you a visual picture of the priorities of the board as we have perceived them in your use of time.

"Committee time has not been included. This would alter the total picture, of course. We hope you will find this data helpful."

Suppose that you were part of this consulting firm and wanted to make some recommendations. How would you complete this paragraph?

"Finally, we would like to offer these suggestions which we hope you will find useful.

"1. Your board appears to be almost totally neglecting the area of _____.

Therefore, you might think about including in a future board agenda an item such as _____.
(specific)

"2. On the other hand, perhaps your board is using a disproportionate amount of time on _____

_____. It might be helpful if you dealt with some of this in another way, such

as _____."
(specific)

SECTION C
Problems Interfering with Board Responsibilities

There are many elements which either contribute to or distract from a board's ability to address effectively its responsibilities. If a board falls into some of the "traps" which distract it from doing a good job for the school, everybody loses. The board members lose the satisfaction of knowing they have contributed something significant to the life of the school. The administration and students lose the potentially constructive help of the board. The parents lose some of their representation in the education of their children.

Here are some of the problems that can easily arise.

1. The board is constantly taken up with its own internal life and doesn't spend enough energy on reaching out to the school's needs. There are boards that seem to spend enormous amounts of energy structuring and restructuring themselves. You can make a fetish out of revising the constitution or altering the committee network. At some point it is all wasted if you don't get to the business of the school's needs.

2. Perhaps the most frequent pitfall is spending too much time getting or sharing information and not doing anything with it. Perhaps you've been involved in meetings where the agenda was dominated by items like "secretary's report of correspondence," "report of committees: student life, buildings and grounds, parish liaison, public relations, etc., etc.", "financial report", "principal's report", and on until it's time to go home. Reports should be in writing and sent ahead of time, with the agenda, when that's feasible, or they should be omitted altogether unless until the board needs the information.

3. Some boards will build their agendas out of current problems without ever getting to any vision or long range planning. It's a variation of "crisis management" and keeps the board only one step ahead of the grim reaper. It also forces the board into making policy decisions "under the gun," rather than considering the long-term and broader implications of those decisions. This is what happens when the board doesn't do any goal setting or anticipate the school's future needs.

4. Poorly done homework can cause a board to bog down. To make a good decision on something, the board members need to understand the needs, have the relevant data beforehand, know the options, and have some sense of the probable outcomes of the decisions the board might make. Much of this can be expedited by work done outside of the board meeting either by the principal or by a committee. If a major (or, worse, minor) decision has to go through all of these steps without prior outside homework, the board is not likely to get very far in two hours of meeting time.

5. The best preparation for a meeting will be largely wasted if the board members aren't disciplined in the way they contribute to the process. Discussion should stay on the point: tangents may be interesting, but don't help to get the business done. A president must be willing to say, "I think we've gotten off the point; let's get back to the originial decision." Members must be careful that they don't repeat themselves.

6. Everyone should take some responsibility for building the agenda. Its final form and specific items will normally represent the joint selection of the president and principal. Each member, however, should express to them his or her insights into what areas or concerns should be occupying the board's attention. The president can solicit this input formally, or members can offer it informally. Together these suggestions form the pool of potential business from which the agendas are ultimately constructed.

7. Some meetings don't deserve to be held. If the board's preliminary agenda does not require the board to make a single substantive decision nor move significantly toward some important decision, then probably the agenda should be redrafted or the meeting cancelled. Write and say, "Enclosed is the information we planned to give you at the meeting; see you next month!"

Lesson 2
BOARD COMMITTEES

The purpose of this lesson is to give board members insight into the theory and practice of constructive use of board committees.

For Leader's Notes, see page 47.

SECTION A
Elements of Committee Effectiveness

Committees are the object of many organization jokes. ("A camel is a horse put together by a committee.") In truth, committees can be a waste of time, an excuse for organizational procrastination and indecision, and a way of making work where there is none.

On the other hand, committees can help an organization to function efficiently, get maximum use of the members' time investment, and allow the organization to expand the number of things it can effectively deal with simultaneously. Governments would be totally paralyzed without committees. The federal government has committees to decide what issues will be assigned to which committees! Most school boards have committees and, properly used, they are very valuable.

The effectiveness of a committee is determined by a number of factors. Addressed here are some of these elements.

1. **Clear expectations.** It needs to be made clear to a committee exactly what the parent board wants it to do. Verbs like "study" and "review" aren't usually very helpful in giving direction to a committee. A mandate which says that a committee should assemble data on this specific issue and make a recommendation to the board on whether it should do such and such is much more helpful.

   Having made clear its expectations, the board should hold the committee accountable for its work. Also, it should be made clear to the committee whether or not it will actually report to the parent board. Normally, a committee does not make decisions for the board; it simply brings information and recommendations back to the board. Occasionally a committee is authorized to make decisions on its own. This, for example, would be the norm for a grievance committee or for a committee charged with recruiting a new principal.

2. **A reasonable timetable.** The committee should be told when the board expects its work to be done and, if that is not for some time, it should be given intermediate dates for partial accomplishment of its task (or at least for progress reports). The timetable ought to allow a reasonable amount of time for the committee to accomplish its assignment.

3. **Qualified and appropriate membership.** The rule on committee membership is that it should be competent for the task and, if necessary, "representative" of the constituency. The competency is a combined thing; no one member need have all the skills required but the membership together should have the capability of doing the task assigned. If the task is sensitive or controversial, the membership of the committee should also reflect the major camps or points of view. This is the "representative" component.

   Committee membership does not have to be limited to board members. If someone from outside of the board can bring expertise needed by the project, by all means include that person (or persons). The same is true of representation; if someone from outside of the board's membership can reflect the concerns of a particular point of view, the board should feel free to ask that person to serve.

4. **Manageable size.** Normally, a committee should be as small as possible, consistent with the membership criteria just mentioned. It usually takes at least 3 or 4 persons to get the combined talents and/or representation necessary for a committee to be effective. However, don't hesitate to have committees of one when that one person has the ability to do the homework and when broader representation is not politically necessary.

5. **Access to relevant data.** To be effective, a committee needs access to information regarding its task. The board and the staff (principal, school secretary, etc.) need to cooperate fully in helping the committee get the information it needs.

6. **The assistance of the school's staff.** The principal needs to see that each committee gets the staff assistance it needs to do its work. This will entail things like arranging for a comfortable place to meet, providing typing, duplicating and mailing services, and keeping records for them.

7. **Interest and appreciation of the board and administration.** A committee's best reward is to have its work taken seriously by the parent board. The board should sustain contact with the committee to ensure that work is progressing and that the committee has whatever it needs to do its job. An occasional question to the committee or offer of assistance by the board's leadership or by the principal lets the committee know that its work is considered important. A word of thanks is also helpful, of course.

SECTION B
Committee Case Study

Please read this case study and prepare to discuss the questions that follow.

In the course of her routine report to the board, principal Sister Alice Marie mentioned that she planned to involve the school in the Reading Olympics sponsored by the March of Dimes. The Reading Olympics is a fundraising event in which money is contributed by sponsors on the basis of the number of books the students read. Proceeds go to research on birth defects. Sister indicated that it would motivate the students to do more extra reading.

George Wilson, a first year board member, objected to the school's involvement. He stated that he was familiar with the program and that the money contributed would be used to support abortions. Sister expressed doubt about Mr. Wilson's objection, saying that the program had been suggested by the diocesan education office. Since no one had any additional information, Lucille Delmonte, the board president, asked George Wilson, Sister Alice Marie, and board member Neil Thompson to constitute a committee to study the issue. George was appointed chairman. The charge given to the committee was to get additional information on the Reading Olympics and to bring a recommendation back to the board at the next meeting if they thought that appropriate. Sister Alice Marie agreed to delay the Reading Olympics for a month so the concern could be addressed.

The committee met briefly after the board meeting and divided assignments. Sister would contact the diocesan office; George would contact the Right to Life office; Neil would contact the March of Dimes people.

When Neil called the March of Dimes office, he was told that the March of Dimes was in no way involved in abortions. The staff person there was aware of the controversy and explained that the misunderstanding arose from the fact that the organization does fund amniocentesis. This is a test for detecting fetal problems. Sometimes, she said, when Downs Syndrome is identified, the mother will make the decision to abort, but the March of Dimes neither counsels nor participates in that. She sent him a package of materials including a letter from a priest at the national office for Family Life indicating that there is no moral objection to Catholics contributing to the March of Dimes.

Sister Alice Marie called the diocesan office and was told that they were aware of the controversy but in recommending the program had reached the same conclusion about its morality, namely that there was no reason for Catholics to object. The superintendent said that, on balance, he felt the March of Dimes research on birth defects was a pro-life activity.

In contacting the local Right to Life office, George discovered the same information on amniocentesis but confirmed that Right to Life takes a very negative view on the March of Dimes involvement. Since there is a strong statistical connection between the amniocentesis test and abortions, they feel that the March of Dimes cannot disassociate itself from responsibility, the Family Life priest notwithstanding.

When the committee met, each member had done the homework and the facts seemed consistent and clear to them. However, they were unable to agree on a recommended action for the board. George favored recommending a policy prohibiting fundraising for any cause even remotely associated with abortion. Neil favored a board resolution endorsing the Reading Olympics. Sister Alice Marie preferred that the board do nothing and leave the decision on these kinds of things to administrative discretion.

At the next board meeting, George fairly presented the information which the committee had obtained and the position of each of the three committee members. In the absence of guidance from the committee, the board discussed the matter at length and ultimately passed a resolution indicating that the board did not object to the contest but asking the principal to inform parents about the Right to Life objection. The resolution also asked her to make it clear to parents that children were free not to participate.

Questions for Discussion

1. Given George's prejudgment on this issue, was it a mistake to include him in the committee?
2. Should the pastor or assistant pastor have been asked to serve on this committee?
3. Given the theory on committees, would you agree or disagree that this example represented an appropriate use of a board committee?
4. Was there anything that the board president might have done to help the committee's work?

SECTION C
Standing Committees

Ad hoc committees get formed to help the board with a transient issue or to perform a one time task. *Standing committees*, on the other hand, are created to function regularly or repeatedly in some specific, ongoing areas. Here are some examples of standing committees and their respective roles.

1. **Finance:** Review the principal's draft of the school budget, propose the budget to the board, recommend tuition rates, negotiate parish subsidy to the school with the parish finance committee.
2. **Policy:** Identify policy needs, make policy proposals to the board, cast policy proposals in correct form, help the board monitor the effectiveness of its policies.
3. **Executive:** Determine (subject to board approval) the priorities of the board, advise the board president between meetings.
4. **Nominating:** Recruit candidates for the board and for board offices, arrange for elections.
5. **Grievance:** Hear and resolve appeals to the board according to predetermined board procedures. (These may accommodate teacher vs. administrator grievances and even, for severe situations such as explusion or lengthy suspension, student/parent vs. administration grievances.)
6. **Planning:** Assist the board to develop goals (and, hopefully, a long range plan) beginning with identifying needs and collecting data.
7. **Public relations:** Promote the image of the school in the community.
8. **Enrollment:** Design and implement plans for encouraging families to enroll their children in the school.
9. **Curriculum:** Offer counsel to the administration on what programs should be included in the curriculum of the school.
10. **Constitution:** Review the constitution and bylaws periodically to see whether any changes appear to be needed.
11. **Buildings and grounds:** Monitor the condition of the facilities, project major repairs and replacements needed, make recommendations on buildings and grounds to the finance committee of the parish council.

Here again is the list of standing committees frequently appointed by school boards; rarely would a board have all of them. To crystallize your own judgment, and perhaps to suggest some direction to the board, think about the potential value of each of these committees to your own board. Opposite each committee, circle the letters to the right which indicate whether you think such a committee is (or would be) absolutely essential (AE), very helpful (VH), useful (US), or not necessary (NN).

If there is another committee you would like to see established, write it in at the end.

COMMITTEE	ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL	VERY HELPFUL	USEFUL	NOT NECESSARY
Buildings and Grounds	AE	VH	US	NN
Constitution	AE	VH	US	NN
Curriculum	AE	VH	US	NN
Enrollment	AE	VH	US	NN
Executive	AE	VH	US	NN
Finance	AE	VH	US	NN
Grievance	AE	VH	US	NN
Nominating	AE	VH	US	NN
Planning	AE	VH	US	NN
Policy	AE	VH	US	NN
Public Relations	AE	VH	US	NN
_____	AE	VH	US	NN
_____	AE	VH	US	NN

Lesson 3
POLICY DEVELOPMENT

The purpose of this lesson is to give board members an understanding of how board policy should be developed.

For Leader's Notes, see page 48.

SECTION A
Steps in Policy Development

These are the steps that go into the development of a school board policy. Some of them may take place more or less informally according to the style of a given board, but all need to be present in some fashion if the board's policy decisions are to be of a high quality.

1. The need is identified. Policies are a response to a school need in which the board should be giving the principal some direction. Probably most often the need is identified by the principal. On some occasions, the board itself, one of its members, or the pastor may point out the need for some policy. Occasionally, a crisis in the school, an unexpected opportunity, or an observation or complaint made by a parent may surface a policy need.

2. If the "need" is petty or represents a unique situation not likely to recur, a policy is probably not necessary. The principal may address the need directly, or the board and/or the prinicipal may judge that an administrative regulation is required. Sometimes formation of a policy is an inadequate response: addressing the need may require a program of some kind.

   However, barring these circumstances, the board in its discussion, or sometimes the principal on its behalf, makes a determination that a policy should be developed.

3. Someone (usually the principal) collects data which will help the board understand the need. The principal uses this data to identify policy options which are desirable, feasible, and consistent with diocesan policy.

4. After weighing the probable consequences of each policy option, the principal then submits to the board his/her recommendation and the rationale for that choice.

   The proposal (recommended policy option) itself should be written in policy language. Normally it should not include background, history, or rationale. It should be clear, direct, and briefly stated. Usually the principal drafts the wording, but anyone with an understanding of policy and a talent for words can do it.

5. *First reading.* The policy proposal is presented to the board for its consideration. No vote is taken at this time. The background for the policy proposal is explained, the rationale for the selection of this recommendation is explained, and questions are answered.

6. Consultation takes place as the board judges appropriate. Depending on the nature of the policy proposal, board members may want to discuss the matter with their constituents or to consult with resource persons. If they feel that groups who would be affected by the policy ought to have the opportunity to express their opinions to the board, board members may decide to have a "hearing" of some kind regarding the recommended proposal.
7. *Second reading.* This is the occasion for the board's official discussion and vote on the policy proposal. At this time, the policy draft can be accepted, amended and accepted, sent back to the writer(s) for reworking or rejected, according to the regular decision-making process of the group.
8. The policy is promulgated. Groups affected by the policy are notified through a routine process. The board's policy manual is updated with the new addition or change.
9. Evaluation of the policy is made after it has had a reasonable time to function. This is normally three months, six months, or a year. Is it working well? Is it accomplishing what the board wanted from it? Does it need to be reconsidered?

Got another minute? Try this:

Pick a number from 1 to 9. Reread the step that has that number. What would happen if that step were omitted?

SECTION B
Policy Development Case Study

The situation described here is a real case history. Please read through it and be prepared to discuss the questions at the end.

The Diocesan School Board has a policy committee. Its function is to create policy wording for the board's approval in areas where the board has given its general direction. The committee (working with the superintendent) also uses its own initiative to bring proposals to the board as it perceives needs.

In the course of a routine review of existing policies, the policy committee suggested some minor rewording in a policy whose main import was that pregnancy is not an appropriate reason to expel a student. At the same time, the policy committee proposed a new policy stating that marriage was not grounds for expulsion either. The two proposals were given to board members to discuss with their local school boards.

The proposals became quite controversial. Some local school board members wanted to repeal the policy on pregnancy. Many were uncomfortable with the proposed policy allowing married students. At the next Diocesan School Board meeting, the superintendent arranged to have both sides of the married student issue presented. The Vicar for Education outlined the argument in favor of allowing married students to continue in school. He pointed out that marriage is a sacrament and should not be treated as an expellable offense. He said that the diocese had very stringent requirements for teenage marriages and that is was not the function of the school to police this or punish those who chose to marry. His main point was that the school, as a function of the Church, should deal individually with these situations from a sensitive and understanding point of view; it should not pass an *ante factum* judgment on those individuals.

A high school principal presented the administrative ramifications of allowing married students to remain in school. He reminded the board of the poor success record of teenage marriages. He suggested that married students might not be as serious about their own education, and would downgrade the school's academic climate. He also enumerated possible practical problems: Who would be held accountable for tuition? To whom would a discipline problem with the student be taken? What authority would the principal have to prohibit these students from holding parties in their home?

The superintendent took a position in favor of the policy but did not campaign for it. Most of the principals sided against the policy.

At the next Diocesan School Board meeting, the votes were taken. The revised policy on pregnant students passed easily. The policy proposal on married students was defeated.

Now a pregnant student may remain in school, provided she's not married.

Questions for Discussion

1. Is it a good idea for the board to have a policy committee?
2. Was the policy committee here in error to propose a policy for which no one was asking?
3. Was there data which the superintendent or the policy committee should have supplied and did not? If so, what kind of data should have been provided?
4. Were the presentations by the principal and the Vicar a good idea?
5. Were there other interested parties that should have been consulted and were not?

SECTION C
Evaluation of Policy Development

Give some thought to these questions:

1. Does our board have any mechanism for identifying policy needs other than addressing those raised by the principal? For example:
   - Board planning process
   - Open forum at meetings for parent input
   - Parish (or parent) surveys
   - Membership in National Assocation of Boards of Education
   - Contacts with other school boards in the diocese
2. Is our principal asked to bring to the board options and recommendations in policy situations?
3. How are our policies announced to the people who need to know about them?
4. How are our policies filed and kept available? Have we a numbering system for them?
5. When did we last evaluate a policy's effectiveness? How do we do it?

Lesson 4
THE SCHOOL AS CATHOLIC

The purpose of this lesson is to give board members some understanding of the components that help to make a school unique as a CATHOLIC school.

For Leader's Notes, see page 49.

SECTION A
Components of Catholic Uniqueness

The Catholic school is more than a school conducted under Catholic auspices. It has a quality of its own that makes it a specifically Catholic institution. While each Catholic school is unique in its own character and enfleshes the quality of "Catholic" in its own special way, there are certain components for which all Catholic schools must strive. Here is a list that endeavors to specify components of that uniqueness.

1. **The school's philosophy reflects its Catholic character.** The Catholic school is a place where a faith view of the world shapes its perspective on both the students it teaches and on the content of its curriculum. "The integration of religious truth and values with the rest of life, which is possible in these (Catholic) schools, distinguishes them from others." (*Teach Them*, p. 3) The Catholic school's philosophy statement is a written expression of its commitment, the distinctive religious purposes for which it exists.
2. **The Catholic school communicates to its students the gospel message.** While this takes place in many ways, it includes particularly the systematic teaching of organized religion courses by teachers adequately trained in theology. It may also include formal programs dealing with justice and peace, human development, and other topics with serious religious implications. "The school should have a set curriculum, with established goals and objectives, open to review and evaluation by parish boards and diocesan supervisory teams." (*Sharing the Light of Faith*, p. 232) Communicating the gospel message also requires the example of teachers "whose daily witness to the meaning of mature faith and Christian living has a profound impact upon the education and formation of the pupils." (*Teach Them*, p. 3)
3. **The school teaches and models faith community.** The school is called to be a microcosm of the Church, with each member sensitive to and supportive of the other members. "Building and living community must be prime, explicit goals of the contemporary Catholic school." (*To Teach as Jesus Did*, p. 108) This means that the staff understands the worth of each child as a brother or sister of Jesus and asks students to be concerned about each other. It means also that the school makes a formal effort to involve students in their parishes since the parish is the community unit through which they will relate to Church for their adult lives. Included also in this mandate is the need for staff members to relate to each other in respectful and supportive ways. The board itself has some responsibility to provide working space and conditions for staff which are responsive to the Church's social teachings of the dignity of work.

4. **The Catholic school is a place that fosters the formation of conscience.** Christian doctrine is not a sterile collection of theological tenets. It is a living faith which shapes the standards for behavior which one adopts. The school should encourage students (according to their level of maturity) to be creative, critical thinkers, capable of standing outside of their culture, reflecting upon it from a Christian perspective, and *acting* on their belief.

5. **The school teaches its students the importance of service.** This suggests that each student should become involved in service in some way. It also means that the school must be prepared to reflect with the students on the theological rationale for a Christian's duty to service. In the Catholic school, "young people can learn together of human needs, whether in the parish, the neighborhood, the local civic community, or the world, and begin to respond to the obligation of Christian service." (*To Teach as Jesus Did*, p. 109)

6. **The Catholic school is a prayerful place.** There is occasion for prayer by both students and faculty including liturgies, paraliturgies, informal prayer and prayer formulas. "The Catholic school loses its purpose without . . . frequent encounter with Christ." (*The Catholic School*, p. 55) There is provision for students to prepare for first sacraments and to have access periodically to the sacrament of reconciliation. If possible, there may also be a chapel or school "prayer place."

7. **The school has clear expectations for discipline** which recognize the need for rules and limits and yet are patient and forgiving. A Catholic school's discipline code insists on respect for people, property, and others' opportunity to learn. It is built upon what is likely to motivate the students to accept responsibility for self and others, rather than on what is convenient for the staff. And it is administered with sensitivity rooted in respect for the dignity of the student as a brother or sister of Jesus.

8. **The school teaches students to appreciate their Catholic culture.** This means that students come to understand something of the rich tradition and history of their religious legacy. They see the traditional symbols and sacramentals; they are at least literate about traditional Catholic devotions and practices (e.g. rosary, stations, benediction); and they recognize and celebrate church seasons, feasts, and saints. The school also is attentive to current church news, particularly in the parish and diocese.

9. **The school raises career choices in vocational terms** (including the religious life option). "One measure of a school's success is its ability to foster a sense of vocation, of eagerness to live out the basic baptismal commitment to service, whether this is done as a lay person, religious, deacon, or priest." (*Sharing the Light of Faith*, p. 232)

10. **The Catholic school recognizes the role of parents as the primary educators of their children.** It provides structures (such as the school board and the parent-teacher organization) for parents to communicate and collaborate with the school. It attempts to provide parents with ideas and resources for supporting, reinforcing, and extending their children's learning. Its teachers are open to and respectful of parents' perceptions of the needs and potential of their children. "Today's Catholic school . . . is a center in which parents and teachers, guided by the Holy Spirit, collaborate in giving children a complete Catholic education." (*Teach Them*, p. 7)

11. **The school is an extension of the teaching of the bishop.** It sees itself as respnsible to him for the orthodoxy of its religion program and, more than that, for its efforts to become the best possible *Catholic* school. It helps students to appreciate the role of bishop and pastor in the Catholic Church structure.

SECTION B
Transcript of Interview for Principal

The school will be needing a new principal next year and the board has established a search committee to interview the most promising applicants. This is a transcript of a portion of the Search Committee's conversation with Ms. Applicanto, one of the candidates for the position.

S.C.: Ms. Applicanto, let us talk to you a little about your perceptions of the unique character of a Catholic school. What do you think is really important to a school to make it Catholic?

M.A.: Well, I think a Catholic school is unique in its discipline for one thing. A Catholic school should insist that the kids get down to business and learn. You can't do a good job of that if they feel they can talk in class and be all over the building.

S.C.: How far do you carry that?

M.A.: Well, it doesn't have to be like a prison. There can and should be some rapport and affection between the teachers and the students. But you must make sure that there are rules and that they are understood and enforced.

S.C.: We hear you but, in a way, you could also be describing a public school with a certain philosophy on discipline. What makes the school really Catholic, in your view?

M.A.: Sir?

S.C.: Well, we call the school by a saint's name, but surely that's not all there is to it. We also have a time in the schedule to teach religion, and we have a religion curriculum. That sort of thing. Is there anything else?

M.A.: Oh, sure. There are also liturgies, or I would want to have them. And there should be prayer. Catholic schools I've attended have always started the day with a prayer. But especially Mass; it's important that the priest be seen in school.

S.C.: How about the sisters?

M.A.: You're lucky to have two sisters on the staff. I think that's wonderful. It makes parents feel connected a little to their own Catholic school education.

S.C.: And the lay teachers?

M.A.: They're important too, of course. What can I say? I'm one of them. We've kept it going.

S.C.: Are you familiar with Rome's statement on lay teachers?

M.A.: I've heard of it. Candidly, I haven't read it.

S.C.: Anything else different about Catholic schools?

M.A.: This interview.

S.C.: This interview?

M.A.: Well, I can't imagine the public schools allowing the clients to interview principal candidates! I think it's a neat idea.

S.C.: Why?

M.A.: Well, I guess when you think of it, you people pay the bills.

S.C.: Right. Talk to us about curriculum in this context. Is there a sense in which the instructional program is "Catholic"?

M.A.: You can talk about God. My teaching field is social studies, and it's helpful when you're able to address some of the current issues and problems in the context of a values system. Catholic school teachers don't have to worry about someone accusing them of breaching the wall of separation between Church and State. That's a big plus. Is that the sort of thing you meant?

S.C.: Yes, I guess so. Perhaps now we can move on to some other areas we want to discuss with you.

M.A.: Fine.

Question for Discussion:

How would you judge Ms. Applicanto relative to her ability to sustain and build the uniquely "Catholic" dimension of the school?

SECTION C

Assessment of Your School's Catholicity

It is hoped that your study of this topic has given you some sharper insights into the ingredients that help to give a school its distinctive character as *Catholic*. It is now time to give some thought to the Catholic flavor of *your* school.

List three or four things which you, as a board member, might point out to the parents of a prospective student as unique about the program they would find in *your* school because it is Catholic.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

List two or three things to which you might want to give additional attention if you were the principal of your school and wanted to further strengthen its religious character.

- _____
- _____
- _____

Alternate Exercise:

Call three or four parents of students in your school and ask them about their reasons for sending their children to the Catholic school. If they simply list "religion" among their reasons, try to probe a bit to see how they describe what that means.

Don't be surprised if they tend to list their reasons in this order:

1. Good academic program (or "They make the kids learn" or "There is discipline so the kids can learn.")
2. The school helps them to be sensitive and polite human beings (or "They teach them respect" or "They make them behave.")
3. Religion (or "They teach them right from wrong" or "They teach them about God.")

Lesson 5
LONG RANGE PLANNING

The purpose of this lesson is to provide the board with an understanding of "long range planning" and a process for undertaking it.

For Leader's Notes, see page 51.

SECTION A
Components of Long Range Planning

The premise of this lesson is that, if a school can project where it will go in the next three to five years, it is in a much stronger position to control its own destiny. A bit of foresight plus a bit of planning will make a world of difference in whether or not a school will be pleased with its "future history".

Some long range planning can get very complex and sophisticated. But long range planning does not have to be an intimidating exercise. The model presented here is relatively simple and yet should be adequate for most school situations. The process will be dealt with later; this introduction will describe what "your plan" will look like. Let us say that "your plan" is a four-year plan; you might decide to make it a three-year plan or a five-year plan.

Your written plan, and it must be written, will have six sections, each dealing with one component of the school's operation:

1. **Enrollment:** This section will estimate the numbers of students which the school will serve in the next four years. It will also identify where these students will come from (parish residents, move-ins or transfers, noncatholics) and what their needs will be (handicapped, gifted, learning disabled). This section is very important because it determines to a great extent what will be required in the other areas listed below.
2. **Curriculum:** The plan will say what changes are expected in the school's curriculum. For example, it will outline what courses will be revised, what textbooks will be changed, and what academic programs will be added or dropped.
3. **Supportive Services:** This section will look at the school's four-year future in the areas other than curriculum. These might include lunch services, the athletic program, and transportation.
4. **Staffing:** The plan will project staffing needs and staffing changes. It will report any new positions which the school anticipates (e.g., full time kindergarten teacher, additional part time secretary, part time coordinator for gifted students program) and positions which are likely to be reduced. (It does not need to include data or guesses about potentially sensitive information: "Do you expect to retire in the next four years?" or "Will you be getting pregnant and taking a leave?")

5. **Facilities:** The long range plan will identify major changes or additions relating to the building and the school's space. If enrollments will be increasing or decreasing, what implications does that have for space? If new programs are to be added, what facilities will they require? What capital repairs are due?

6. **Finances:** The final section of the plan will deal with the projected costs of the school and with the sources of funding. What are the cost implications of the things noted in the first five sections? How much will the parish be contributing? What tuition rates should be anticipated? What other funding sources ought to be considered?

Now, within each of these six sections, here are the contents to be included. First, some "Observations from the Data". These will be highlights from the information which you can obtain relating to that section. For example, in the section on enrollment, you may place information such as "Infant baptisms have leveled off at 45-50 per year for the last five years. There has been a gradual growth in parish membership of about 5 percent each year. . . ."

Next (in each section) will be "assumptions". These are the unproven predictions which the planners chose to make regarding things that will affect the future of the school. For example, the section on enrollment, an assumption might be: "Barring special intervention, about 50 percent of our registered families will want to enroll their children in grade one." In the section on finances: "The inflation rate will be about 6 percent." In the section on facilities: "The roof on the south wing will need replacement in three or four years."

The next component of each section will spell out the school's "Needs and wants". "Needs" are the things perceived as necessary to preserve the school and its present quality. "Wants" are the things perceived as desirable for the improvement of the school. Again an example: in the section on curriculum, replacement of science books for grades one-eight may be specified as a "need" while the addition of a part-time librarian to staff might be listed as a "want".

Finally—and this is the payoff of the planning process—each section has a list of "Goals and Objectives". "Goals" are long range (three-five years) things to be accomplished. "Objectives" are short range (one-year) things to be accomplished in pursuit of a goal. For example, in the section on finances, a goal might be to establish a tuition assistance fund; that goal might be supported by objectives such as inaugurating a monthly collection for tuition assistance, introducing the Adopt-a-Student program, and establishing a committee to locate and verify situations of need. These short range "objectives" help to achieve the longer range "goal".

In summary, then, the finished product of the long range plan described here has six sections which deal with enrollment, curriculum, supportive services, staffing, facilities, and finances. Each of these sections has four subheadings: observations from the data, assumptions, needs and wants, and goals and objectives. The whole plan need not be lengthy: perhaps eight or ten typed pages at most.

This outline is a "one-size-fits-all" format. You should feel free to tailor it to your own needs. An individual school may discover that there are no needs that relate to one of the sections (e.g. facilities), or that no assumptions need to be made about another section (e.g. supportive services). Fine. Don't invent something to fill the space! Possibly your school situation has another (seventh) area of concern that merits another section. By all means make the accommodations. This model is a place to start but it is only a tool. To be worthwhile, it must be made to serve your purposes.

SECTION B
Example of a Long Range Plan

Here is a brief portion of the long range plan from one Catholic elementary school. Read it as an example of a plan developed on the model described in Section A of this lesson. Then go on to the questions which follow.

ST. CAMILLUS SCHOOL PLAN—Section II: CURRICULUM

A. Observations from the Data

1. Courses of study regulating the school's curriculum are provided by the diocesan office; they are revised on a five-year cycle.
2. Textbooks are selected from a list approved by the diocesan office and are replaced about every five years.
3. Our A-V software collection is quite good, but the hardware items (projectors especially) are wearing out.
4. Our library collection is getting dated.
5. Volunteers are helping the teachers with the physical education program and with the library.

B. Assumptions

The diocesan office will continue to provide revisions for courses of study.

C. Needs/Wants

1. Introduction of a computer literacy program in the next three years (at least for grades six-eight). (Want)
2. Improving A-V hardware. (Need)
3. Updating library collection. (Need)
4. Getting special teachers for physical education, art, and music. (Want)
5. Replacing textbooks for math, science, health, reading. (Need)
6. Adding professional staff for the library. (Want)

D. Goals/Objectives

Goal 1: To improve the library services so that each grade will find them more useful.

a. Objective (year 1): Increase the book budget to at least $3.50/pupil.
b. Objective (year 1): Hire a qualified librarian for 12 hours/week.
c. Objective (year 2): Provide for weeding the collection to eliminate dated material.
d. Objective (year 1 or 2): Inaugurate a book donations program in the parish.
e. Objective (year 3): Increase librarian to full time staff position.

Goal 2: To update the A-V hardware.

a. Objective (year 1): Rep[illegible] 16 mm projector.
b. Objective (year 1): Repair film strip projectors; service record players.

c. Objective (year 2): Replace two film strip projectors; purchase two overhead projectors.
d. Objective (year 3): Provide drapes for two south-side classrooms.

Goal 3: To replace textbooks as necessary.

a. Year 1: Primary grade math; all science.
b. Year 2: Intermediate grade math; primary grade reading; all health.
c. Year 3: Junior high math; intermediate grade reading.

Goal 4: To introduce computers to the school program.

a. Objective (year 1): Determine specific instructional goals and the hardware/software needed for meeting them.
b. Objective (year 2): Reexamine needs and develop purchasing plan and budget as necessary.

Questions for Discussion

Take a few minutes to discuss these questions:

1. What advantages are there in this kind of planning?

_____

_____

_____

2. What risks are inherent in not doing some long range planning?

_____

_____

_____

3. In what areas might *we* expect long range planning to be particularly helpful to our situation?

_____

_____

_____

4. What data could we get that would be useful to our projections and planning?

_____

_____

_____

SECTION C
Process for Writing a Long Range Plan

Developing a long range plan involves a substantial but not overwhelming amount of work. This sheet describes one process for getting the long range plan written. All sorts of variations are possible depending on the local situation; feel free to make accommodations. Read through this description to get an idea of the kind of work entailed.

1. The board should charge a small committee with the task of developing a written long range plan. The group should have 4 to 10 members. They need not all be board members. The individuals should have some understanding of the school, have the flexibility and listening abilities to work with a group and be able to give the project some time. It is helpful if some have experience in planning or working with management by objectives but that is not essential. The principal (or assistant principal) should be either a member of the group or "staff person" to the group and attend the meetings. The school should also see that the group gets the services it needs by way of data collecting, typing, etc.

2. The committee assembles data in the six areas of concern: enrollment, staffing, facilities, curriculum, support services, budget. Mainly it is looking for:

   - What is the present status?
   - What trends are evident from the last few years?
   - What projections do knowledgeable people make for the next few years?

   To get data on this last point, the committee certainly must talk with the administration; it may also wish to ask others such as staff, students, pastor, parents, other board members. These queries may be through meetings, personal contacts, or written surveys.

3. The committee reviews the data in each of the six areas and attempts to identify the "needs" and "wants" of the school. These are then converted into goals. A goal represents the fulfillment of a need or want. "We need 10% more students" becomes "Goal: to increase our enrollment by 10%."

   "Objectives" are elaborations of the goal into more specific, shorter range targets. A goal to increase enrollment by 10% may generate a half dozen objectives such as "Objective: to provide realtors with promotional information on the school," "Objective: to arrange for personal contacts of families with children who are approaching school age," "Objective: to investigate the feasibility of starting a kindergarten."

4. Somewhere in the process, the number of things to be included in the plan has to be narrowed. This can be done even at the needs-and-wants stage. If there are too many to deal with, the committee must say ruthlessly, "We accept these as feasible to deal with and we reject those as of lesser importance and too much for us to do anything with at this time." This certainly has to be done with potential goals and objectives; the goals and objectives selected should be challenging but not beyond the capacity of the school to deal with.

5. The committee reconciles the goals and objectives for each of the six planning areas to be sure they are internally compatible. (Are enrollment goals provided for in projecting facilities goals? Are staffing goals costed out and provided for in the financial goals? Etc., etc.)

6. The committtee stays in touch with the parent board. As a minimum this means that interim reports are given. Better, the parent board should be involved at these key points along the process:

   - Suggesting needs and wants for the school (#3);
   - Helping to identify the priorities (#4).

The committee brings the written plan to the board in draft form. If the board has reservations or suggestions, the committee may need to develop a revised plan to get board approval. The committee may also need to go to the board for direction if, during the planning process, it reaches an impasse which it can't resolve.

7. If the planning is to produce anything concrete for the school, it is essential that there be "programs". Programs are the projects or activities designed to achieve the objectives you have set. Each program should specify:
   - What is to be done
   - By whom it is to be done (or at least who will take responsibility for seeing that it gets done)
   - By when it will be done (with deadlines for intermediate steps if that would be useful)
   - Standards for measuring the success of the program.

   While programs are necessary, they need not be included in the formal long range plan. It is probably more feasible to design them one year at a time and put them with the written long range plan as an addendum for that year.

8. A year later, the board (perhaps using the same type of committee) needs to see that these things are done:
   - Progress for the first year is reviewed and evaluated.
   - The continuing validity of the goals and objectives is reviewed. Changes are made if they appear to be called for. (New data or a year of experience may alter the perceptions of what is needed or feasible.)
   - New programs/projects are designed for the next year.

9. The process is begun again (recycled) periodically. It would be a rare plan that could not profit from redoing after two or three years!

Lesson 6
BOARD PRAYER

The purpose of this lesson is to highlight the importance of prayer in the board's life and to offer some ideas for board prayer.

For Leader's Notes, see page 54.

SECTION A
Prayer as a Board Function

To be true to its role in the Catholic educational setting, the school board needs prayer. Catholic schools are, after all, religious institutions dedicated to raising young people's consciousness of God's presence in their lives. This is the presence of a personal God, the Yahweh who rewarded and punished but always loved and preserved his people in the old covenant. It is the presence of the Father who sent his beloved Son, Jesus, to be the firstborn of a redeemed people.

This is not just conceptual information. It is faith reality. It is a view of the purpose of life that affects everything a Christian does. If the board is to give direction to the school's efforts to nurture that understanding/habit in students, then the board itself must be in tune with that reality. Obviously, the prayer life of the board's individual members will affect the decisions they help to make for the school. But the board itself also needs to be reflective and prayerful. It needs to absorb some sense of its role as a facilitator in proclaiming the gospel. It needs to *feel* its responsibility for making the Lord real for the school's students.

This doesn't happen automatically because the school philosophy or the board constitution says so. The board must provide itself with occasions to be with the Lord together and to pray for the success of the work they do.

Jesus was the man of prayer. Reading the gospels, one is impressed by how frequently he went off to pray—either alone or taking some of his apostles. He needed the time to reflect on what he was doing, to be sure he was listening to his father. This example sets a standard for those who contribute to his work.

It would be ideal if the school board could plan a "Prayer Weekend" involving an overnight. This could involve just the school board members (perhaps with spouses), or it could be planned in conjunction with a retreat for parish council members or faculty members. If more than one group is involved, a portion of the program could be designated for the groups to separate so that members of each group could reflect together on their particular ministry.

Whether or not such an intensive prayer day is feasible, the board ought to set aside prayer time at each meeting. The prayer should be prepared. It is not a good idea to begin every meeting with prayer formula ("Let's start with an Our Father and a Hail Mary") or with a spontaneous prayer ("Father, would you start us off with a prayer?"). To a point, that's fine—certainly better than omitting prayer from the meeting. The risk is that this becomes a formality, akin to singing "The Star Spangled Banner" before sports events. The board's prayer should be a true call to reflection, with adequate preparation and time given to it so as to achieve that.

The prayer does not need to entertain. At the same time, some variety and group participation are helpful to people in bringing themselves into the presence of God. It helps them to pray actively. Each board member should be willing to assist occasionally in the preparation of prayer, and always in becoming fully engaged with the prayer which the board is sharing.

Don't be afraid to take some time with it. Ten minutes may seem like a long time but, for a Catholic school board, it is a modest enough percentage of a two-hour meeting to assign to prayer. Even a 30 minute prayer occasionally is not inappropriate.

SECTION B
Prayer Service for a Board

Leader: Father, we come to you in prayer to begin our meeting. We are here because we wish to contribute to the academic, personal, and religious growth of our young people. We are aware that we are blind without the light of your Spirit and weak without the sustenance of your Son's words and sacrament. Be with us tonight so that we ourselves may grow in faith. Be with us so that we may be wise in our efforts to serve your young people.

Reading: (One of the following passages.)

Acts 2: 32-42. (Peter preaches that Jesus has been raised and we and our children have been called to conversion, baptism, fellowship.)

Ephesians 1: 3-14. (God chose us to be his children through Christ. Let us praise him.)

I Thessalonians 1: 2-5a. (You heard the gospel through the power of the Holy Spirit. You have shown faith, love, and hope.)

(Reflection pause.)

Leader: Jesus taught us that where we gather in His name, He is in our midst. Joined with Him now, we go to the Father in prayer.

Side A: Let us pray for the young people in our school whose growth in wisdom and grace depends in some measure on our work and our decisions.

Side B: Father, fill the lives of these students with your presence and your love. Help them to see your providence in the world they study and your care in the lives of the people around them.

Side A: Let us pray for the teachers and staff at our school. Their baptism and confirmation called them to be witnesses to the gospel message.

Side B: Father, support with the gift of your Spirit the work of those who teach and assist our students. Reward their work with the growth of our children and with joy in seeing that growth take place.

Side A: Let us pray for the parents whom our school serves. God has given to them the awesome responsibility of providing for the education of their children. This is a responsibility which, in a modest way, we share together in this school family.

Side B: Father, support the parents and guardians of our students. Make them wise in dealing with their children, generous and patient in their sacrifices, and at peace with the burdens they bear for their families.

Side A: Let us pray for our church, the faith community with whom we make our pilgrimage to God. It is especially with this famiiy that we find the presence of the Lord.

Side B: Father, continue to give life to your people. We thank you for the gifts of your priests and of all who continuously re-create our faith family.

Leader: With the words that Jesus taught us, we pray now that God's kingdom may come in our families and in our world.

All: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever.

Amen.

NOTE

You may wish to use this occasion, when the board pauses to reflect on the prayer dimension of its activity, for discussion:

1. Is it feasible to assign responsibility for preparation of a prayer for each of the board meetings scheduled through the balance of the year? (Specific persons—specific dates.) Pairs or teams of members could volunteer. Perhaps the faculty would take responsibility for one of the prayers.
2. Is it feasible for the board to spend a "prayer day" together? Where? When? With whose direction? Spouses? Share with faculty or other groups? Overnight? Planned by? Next steps?

SECTION C

Options in Planning Board's Prayers

Give some thought to a variety of prayer arrangements for the board's time together. Here are some options which might be considered in planning the board's prayers:

1. There are prayer books with collections of popular prayers, or prayers written by the authors. You might purchase a couple for the board and use some that seem helpful. Feel free to edit and adapt the prayers to suit the board's needs at that moment. Prayer formulations are intended to promote communication with God and not to replace it.
2. Does someone on the board play a guitar or other instrument that could be used to lead a group hymn? Perhaps a member of the school staff would be willing to come once or twice a year to help lead the board in prayer.
3. Buy a record of hymns and play a selection for the board occasionally. If it's one with which the board can sing along, so much the better, but reflective listening to the words of a new song can also be a prayerful experience.
4. Schedule the meeting for after a regular parish service (e.g. lenten devotion) and ask the board to attend that service together.
5. Borrow a dozen of the congregational books from the church and pray something from those together (e.g., a reading, response, and prayer from the previous Sunday).
6. An intelligent reading of scripture, with or without additional "prayers", makes wonderful prayer. Historically, the psalms have always been a particularly important part of the Church's official prayer. If you're reading scripture, select a translation which reads easily and understandably.
7. A reading about education, the Catholic school, or the function of a board can be the centerpiece for an effective prayer. For example, simply read the passage, provide a couple of minutes for reflection, and then conclude with a brief, prepared prayer.
8. Solicit spontaneous prayer from each member, using the prayer-of-the-faithful format. This can be assisted by assigning each member a topic. Topics might include students, teachers, parents, Church, parish, board members, the jobless, the poor, the handicapped, etc. These topics could be assigned ahead of time, when the agenda goes out, to give board members the opportunity of preparing if they wish. The petitions are concluded with a short, prepared prayer.
9. The introductory "Prayer" of the Sunday liturgies are good resources. They can be used as written or expanded.
10. Be alert for reusable prayers. If you're at an occasion where a prayer is well done, save a copy and use it. Also, keep a file of prayers for possible reuse at a later occasion.

A FINAL NOTE

Build prayers around the seasons and feasts where this is appropriate. Will the meeting be taking place during Advent, Lent, Easter time, Pentecost time? Will it be taking place just before a holy day, Thanksgiving, Presidents' Day, Memorial Day? Those occasions can provide themes for the prayer.

Lesson 7
EVALUATION OF THE PRINCIPAL

The purpose of this lesson is to familiarize board members with the purpose, potential value, and limitations of their evaluation of the principal.

For Leader's Notes, see page 54.

SECTION A
Points to Consider in Evaluation

Among the functions of a school board are the responsibilities for evaluating the principal and, when a new principal is being hired, participating in the selection procedure. A model for the latter function will be presented later in Section C of this lesson. What is given here is an outline of items on which a board should be able to evaluate the principal.

In reading through the items, please keep these points in mind:

1. The primary purpose of evaluation is the professional growth of the person being evaluated. The evaluation is intended to confirm the principal's strong points and to help the principal to identify and make improvements in areas of weakness.
2. The board is limited in what it can evaluate. It can speak to the principal's service to the board and, as a representative parent group, it can address how well the principal meets parents' expectations. The items listed here revolve around those themes. Evaluation of the principal's performance on the other professional responsibilities (such as supervision of teachers) must come from people with the expertise to assess those responsibilities—usually the superintendent's office.
3. You will be asked at the board meeting to jot down some commendations for your principal and some suggestions for his/her improvement.
4. This is a lesson, not an evaluation. The information you provide should be candid and helpful, but it will be informal and unofficial—totally off the record. The most important thing will be what *you* learn, not what your principal learns.

The Principal's Leadership of and Service to the School Board

1. The principal gives direction to the school board.
   a. Together, principal and board president build the board's agenda.
   b. Principal identifies school needs for the board's attention.
   c. Principal prepares an initial school budget draft for board consideration.

d. Principal offers ideas for (and, when asked, makes arrangements for) the board's inservice study.
e. Principal makes policy recommendations to the board for consideration.

2. The principal provides the board with timely, thorough, and clear information about the school.
   - Principal prepares a written or oral report for each board meeting. This should include information useful for building policies, for evaluating previous board decisions, and for keeping informed about curriculum, staffing, activities, services, regulations, special events, facilities, and school wide problems or concerns.

3. Cooperation, mutual respect, and trust should characterize the relationship between principal and school board.
   a. Principal owes to the board and its individual members public loyalty and respect.
   b. Principal should see that the board has adequate clerical assistance and help with arrangements for its activities.
   c. Principal should assist the board in recruiting new board members.
   d. Principal should see that committees of the board have adequate assistance (data, personnel, materials) to carry out their tasks.

4. The principal demonstrates accountability for the job that has been asked of him/her.
   a. Principal has a responsibility to fulfill the job description in a satisfactory way.
   b. Principal is responsible for implementing the board's policies.
   c. Principal is responsible for completing the tasks assigned him/her as an outgrowth of the board's formal goal-setting session.
   d. Principal is responsible for compliance with diocesan directives.

The Principal's Responsiveness to Parents

1. The principal is sensitive to the concerns of parents.
   a. Principal is accessible to parents and students, is friendly and approachable.
   b. Principal is willing to help parents with problems concerning their children and refers children to special agencies when necessary.

2. The principal respects the role of parents as educators of their children.
   a. Solicits ideas from parents on school policies and operations.
   b. Encourages parents to become involved in school activities.

3. The principal communicates regularly with parents.
   a. Sees that parents know about school functions and activities.
   b. Keeps parents informed about their children's progress and about ways in which parents can help and extend their children's learning.
   c. Helps to work out conflicts which may develop between students and teachers, parents and teachers, or parents and other school staff.
   d. Lets parents and students know what he/she expects of them.
   e. Communicates the school's religious goals to parents and students.

4. The principal demonstrates concern for the welfare of students and for the quality of their education.
   a. Principal is a fair disciplinarian.
   b. Principal provides for the health and personal well-being of students.
   c. Principal sees that the school atmosphere is supportive and conducive to learning.

SECTION B
Evaluation of Your Principal

Duplicate the form below.

Section A of this lesson outlined a series of services expected of a principal, first to the board itself, and then to the school's parent clients. In the first pair of spaces provided below, list two or three areas for which you would like to commend the principal (things the principal does especially well) and one or two suggestions (things you'd like to see receive more attention) relative to the principal's service to the board.

Then, in the next pair of spaces, list two or three items meriting commendation and one or two suggestions relative to the principal's responsibilities to parents.

You will be asked to sign your name and give this to the principal afterwards. It is a totally *unofficial* evaluation but the information may well be useful for the principal's self growth.

Principal's Leadership of and Service to the School Board

Commendations:

_____

_____

_____

Recommendations:

_____

_____

Principal's Responsiveness to Parents

Commendations:

_____

_____

_____

Recommendations:

_____

_____

Signed _____

Questions for Discussion

The following questions are for discussion by the board as time allows.

1. This type of format—criteria listing with open space for commendations and recommendations—is just one evaluation format. Would a rating scale for each item have been easier or allowed for more accuracy?

   Example: Circle one number:
   Principal identifies school needs for the board's attention.
   Strong 5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1 Weak

2. If this were a "real" evaluation for the record, would you have found it more difficult to do? Would you have been more reluctant to sign it?

3. Should the board build a formal (or informal) evaluation of the principal into its annual activity? Should it be associated with contract renewal? Should this type of format be used or should the board explore another format?

SECTION C
Search Committee Tasks

When a new principal is to be selected for the school, the final choice is the prerogative of the pastor. However, usually the school board will be consulted on such a critical decision. This should normally be done by commissioning a "search committee" to assist in the process. Often the superintendent's office will provide some services such as advertising the opening, doing an initial interview of candidates, checking credentials, etc. The search committee should be assigned these tasks:

1. The committee should work out with the pastor a timetable for the process and an understanding about who will contact candidates, etc.
2. The committee should prepare a profile of the position. This includes the job description (at least in general terms), qualifications required, and salary range/benefits. It should also include a brief description of the school and parish.
3. It should help to advertise the position. (Consider notification through the newsletters of the superintendent and religious communities, advertisements in the diocesan and local newspapers, and contacts with area colleges which have educational administration programs.)
4. It should screen resumes and credentials of applicants to see which ones it would like to interview as finalists.
5. It should contact references of the candidates who are finalists. (The committee may want to narrow the group further after these contacts.)
6. It should interview the finalists, evaluating each one. The interview format should be carefully planned so that committee members know what information they want, how they will solicit it, and who will ask which questions. (See below for a suggested outline.)
7. The committee should conclude by giving the pastor its evaluation of each candidate, with a ranking or at least a recommendation for first and second choice.
8. After the pastor has hired the new principal, all other candidates should be contacted and thanked. It is courteous to notify candidates promptly when they are no longer under consideration.

The committee must treat the information involved with great confidentiality. Unlike most board committees, this one does not go back to the parent board for confirmation of its decision. The recommendations go directly to the pastor; the board is simply informed in a very general way about the progress of the search. (Ideally, the board never finds out whether the pastor's choice was the committee's number one recommendation or not!)

The school board can be very helpful to the search committee by clarifying its perceptions of the school's needs and priorities and of what expectations it has of the new principal. The board might also suggest areas of concern which merit some specific probing by the search committee in interviews with the candidates.

As it prepares to interview candidates, the search committee should determine what it wants to know so that it can be systematic and efficient in moving toward a decision. Here is an outline which may be helpful.

Information on a candidate's ability to deal with *students, curriculum and instruction:*

1. Look to resume and references for information on academic background, previous experience, recent professional study and activity.
2. Prepare interview questions to probe . . .
   a. attitudes toward teachers and teaching (e.g. what he/she looks for in a teacher, what have been the high and low points of his/her own teaching experiences, his/her perceived strengths as a teacher);

b. how he/she intends to be involved with students (e.g. does he/she intend to teach, does he/she believe in being present for lunchroom/playground supervision?);
c. thoughts on discipline
d. ideas on involving parents in the school;
e. sensitivity to students with special needs and knowledge of how to provide for them (e.g. high achievers, low achievers, students with histories of behavior problems, handicapped children);
f. ability to explain what he/she thinks it is important for students to learn at various grade levels (primary, intermediate, junior high) and in various subjects.

Information on a candidate's ability to provide *religious leadership* to the school:

1. Look to resume and references for information on training in theology and religious education, recent theology classes and workshops attended, involvement in parish life or diocesan activity.

2. Prepare interview questions to probe . . .
   a. ability to explain what gives the school its religious identity, what the principal can do to give leadership to this;
   b. relationship of pastor and principal, thoughts on how the pastor might be involved in the school;
   c. expectations for staff regarding the religious life of the school.

Information on a candidate's ability to be *creative* and take initiative in the school:

1. Look to resume and references for evidence of a "track record" of imaginative initiatives.

2. Prepare interview questions to probe . . .
   a. what special contributions the candidate has made or feels he/she can make as a principal;
   b. uses the candidate feels can be made of community resources;
   c. how the candidate gets new ideas.

Information on a candidate's ability as an *administrator:*

1. Look to resume and references for evidence regarding leadership style, ability to be systematic, ability to relate to others and work in a group, diplomacy, speaking skills.

2. Prepare interview questions to probe . . .
   a. understanding of the role and responsibility of the school board;
   b. how he/she would like to see time apportioned among his/her responsibilities as a principal;
   c. understanding of financial management, development, fundraising;
   d. ability to communicate clearly and logically;
   e. thoughts on maintaining good relationships with parents;
   f. thoughts on desirable relationships between principal and staff.

Finally, here is a suggested format for an interview with a candidate.

1. Introductions;

2. Explanation of the interview (how long it will last, what steps will follow afterwards, when the candidate will know the outcome);

3. Brief elaboration on the written materials about the school and parish;

4. The interview itself; discussion on the prepared questions.

5. Opportunity for the candidate to ask questions or get clarifications. (Be sure salary and benefits are addressed.)

6. Concluding remarks by chairperson.

Lesson 8
BOARD ACCOUNTABILITY

The purpose of this lesson is to raise the consciousness of board members regarding their responsibility to be accountable to the constituents whom they serve.

For Leadership Notes, see page 55.

SECTION A
Definition of Accountability

Catholic school boards are advisory to the principal and pastor. Their advice is sought because it is valued. The Catholic schools exist to serve parents and their children, to help parents share their faith heritage with their children as well as provide them with a quality education. The school board, then, is seen as representative of the parents, a group constituted to reflect parental thought and aspirations, and to marshal parental talent. In addition, the board is representative to the parish which sponsors the school.

The board, therefore, has an obligation of accountability to these constituents. That obligation implies a large measure of open, two-way communication. This does not require that the board do all of its business in a fishbowl. Committee meetings need not be open. The board is entitled to closed ("executive") sessions to discuss sensitive issues. Sometimes to accomplish its tasks, the board must have confidential information which cannot appropriately be shared.

However, within the limits of the board's functions, the board and its individual members have a responsibility to listen to their constituents and to be accountable back to them. This does not mean that decisions of the board are popularity contests. A board member is not supposed to poll the neighbors on an issue and vote according to their plurality! A board member is supposed to bring to each issue his or her best judgment on what is good for the school. That might or might not coincide with the popular majority. A board member needs the flexibility to participate in board discussion with the freedom to contribute to and join a consensus decision.

Board members do need to have a sense of where their constituents stand, what their priorities are, and what their concerns are. Some of this information is obtained informally in casual conversations with friends, other school parents, and parishioners. Board members do well to raise the topic of the school in appropriate informal settings to see what people are thinking and what they have to say.

It is also possible and useful for the board to provide more formal opportunities for parents and parishioners to be heard on school issues. Here are some ideas that could be considered.

- Board meetings can provide a time for parent input. This time can be controlled by limiting it to, say, a maximum of 20 minutes. Within that, individual parent speakers can be limited to 5 minutes. The advertised

understanding would be that concerns requiring more time may be scheduled as agenda items for the next meeting. Courtesy suggests that this open forum time would be scheduled early on the agenda so that parents could then go home and would not need to stay for the entire meeting.

- Surveys may be conducted on particularly important issues. These could be brief, simple, one or two item questionnaires sent to the parents and/or parishioners (Enclosing stamped return envelopes will enormously improve the percentage of returns you get.) Some issues lend themselves better to phone surveys. Again, keep the questions direct and simple and limit them to a single topic (or two at the most). The questions should be written out for the callers so that each is working from the same base.

Providing vehicles for listening to the board's constituency is half of the accountability task. The other half requires that the board provide information about its activities to the parents and parish. The board meetings themselves are normally open and constituents should be encouraged to attend. In addition, the board should find other routines for reporting back. Here are some ideas for addressing that.

- Send the board minutes (or a summary of them) home to parents.
- Include a brief summary of each meeting in the parish bulletin.
- Arrange for a board display area in the lobby of the school and/or church. Ask someone to take responsibility for keeping it fresh, attractive, and reflective of what the board is up to.
- Produce an easy-to-read annual report to summarize the board's activities for the year.
- If the board is weighing some difficult question, produce a brief "study paper" for the parents which summarize the issue and the board's options.
- Tape the board meetings and make a copy of the tapes available to parents who want to borrow them.
- Post the board meeting agenda (or a narrative summary of it) in the church lobby.
- Send an occasional letter from the board president to the parents and parishioners outlining what the board is doing.
- Ask for time at other meetings (e.g. home-school meetings, parish council meetings) to give a brief report on the school board's activities.

If the board sees itself in a stewardship role, it will make systematic efforts to see that there is regular two-way communication with the people it is there to represent.

SECTION B
Demonstrating Accountability

Accountability suggests that board members should listen to their constituents, make wise and appropriate decisions on their behalf, and keep constituents generally informed about board activity.

Read through the following vignettes. Jot down a few comments indicating how well you believe that the board members demonstrated proper accountability to their constituents. The board will then discuss the cases briefly.

1. James Hammond received a complaint from a parent who said the teacher was "picking on" her son. Hammond said he'd take care of it.
2. The principal asked the board to critique a draft of a proposed school calendar for next year. Phil Donley, who'd like to take his family on a winter trip, proposed replacing the Easter vacation with a winter holiday.
3. Oscar Farrell says that special efforts to tell parents what the board is doing are a waste of time. "Our meetings are open. If they want to know what we're doing, they can come the same as we do."
4. A large group of parents come to the board meeting to support a policy proposal prohibiting use of corporal punishment in the school. Al Downing votes against the policy anyway because he believes in the old adage, "Spare the rod and spoil the child."
5. Board member Nina Dorski is called and scolded by an irate parent because the board is reported to be considering a change in policy on uniforms. Nina says, "I'll listen to you, but I chaired the committee that made that proposal."
6. The board adjourns its meeting early and goes into "executive session" to discuss renewal of the principal's contract. No record ever appears of what was said. The contract is renewed.
7. The parish council's finance committee chairperson calls the board president and says, "Would you see that I get sent a list of families who are more than 30 days in arrears with their tuition payments."
8. At the end of a report on probable future tuition needs, finance committee chairman Alan Lee says, "Could we leave this out of the minutes? People may get very upset if they see these numbers without adequate explanation and dialogue."

SECTION C
Accountability Through Ministry

The early Church came quickly to understand that service (or "ministry") was every Christian's responsibility. Recent theological thinking has highlighted the importance of *ministry* in the life of a Christian.

Jesus came to serve and gave himself "that we may have life and have it more abundantly." He presented himself as the Good Shepherd who loved his flock and reached out to serve the needs of each member of that flock. The profound lesson that he taught to his disciples on the night before his death was a lesson of service. He washed their feet. And then he explained to them that it was important for them to follow his example in this. This poignant incident picked up a theme which has surfaced constantly in his teaching. "He who would be first among you must become the servant of all."

There were, and still are individuals singled out for particular services to the Church community in the "ordained" ministry. But from the beginning it was clear that the Church was not perceived in the model of the modern corporate structure. It was seen as a living unit in which each member had a role to contribute, and all members together were extensions of Jesus' presence and ministry. John's image was the vine with its branches; Paul's was the body of Christ—many members each unable to do the function of the others.

No wonder then that baptism and confirmation are seen as sacraments which both incorporate a person into the Christian family and give that individual a responsibility to serve. In *The Ministry of All Christians*, Anglican theologian Norman Pittenger makes the point that, like the Bishop of Rome, every one of us is called to be a "servant of the servants of God." All, he says, are responsible to be "undershepherds" of the Good Shepherd.

This service or *ministry* takes many, many forms. The Epistle to the Ephesians points out that "it is he (Christ) who gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers in role of service for the faithful to build up the body of Christ." (Ephesians 4:11-12)

For today's Christian also, service takes many forms—even in the life of a single individual. You may by occupation serve others as an attorney, or salesperson, or teacher, or refuse collector, or banker, or typist, or farmer, or clergyman, or fireman, etc. You may have family (and extended family) who depend on you in various ways. You are an actor in the daily cameo situations in which some stranger needs a few moments of help. And there are the volunteer activities in which you choose to offer your talents. The school board is one of these.

The gift of your time, talent, energy, and judgment which you give to the Catholic school through the school board is *ministry*. It is a part, an important component, of the united effort which makes the school possible. You give the gift with generosity because the tasks cannot be done well with halfhearted effort. You give the gift with humility because you know your best effort has no guarantee of success. You participate with openness because you know that many parents depend on this school to enrich the lives of their children and to help those children grow to be people of faith.

A board member needs perseverance to do a committee assignment thoroughly even after it has lost its novelty or excitement. A board member needs balance to be a conscientious participant without neglecting family or business. A board member needs wisdom to listen to constituents, understand their concerns, and weigh these into the school's overall welfare.

Board service is a very real form of ministry, a response to the Christian's duty to serve.

Leader's Notes

Leader's Notes—Lesson 1
Board's "Calendar" of Responsibilities

The purpose of this lesson is to sharpen board members' understanding of the board's responsibilities and to help them be more effective in pursuing those tasks.

A. Ask the board members to read Section A before the meeting.

(Optional step.) If you have time before the meeting, go through the agendas/minutes from the last two or three meetings and jot down each item under one of the nine categories described in Section A. This could be put on 8 ½" x 11" paper and duplicated, or on newsprint and taped up. It will serve as a thought starter for Section B.

B. At the meeting ask the members to do the "matching" section and then to complete the blanks in the final paragraph of Section B. If you were able to do (or get someone to do) the project described in paragraph 2 above, distribute it—or tape it up—at this time. Allow five to seven minutes for the group to do the Section B exercises.

Solicit some sharing of the ideas which the group members put into the final paragraph. You may find it helpful to write them on newsprint. Encourage board members to substantiate their opinions with references to specific activities undertaken by the board during the past year. Do point one first (neglected areas) and then point two (over-attended areas).Watch the time: make sure you get to both points without running over the time allotted for this study exercise.

If there are one or two items on which the group appears to be in agreement, you might point that out. Then ask to keep the Section B from as many members as are willing to turn them in. President/principal can review them later for additional insights and suggestions.

C. Ask the board members to read Section C after the meeting.

It would be a good idea for the principal (and/or president) to have a "board calendar book" for the year. Keep a page for each scheduled meeting and one for each of the in-between times. On the meeting sheets, jot down possible agenda items. For example, before the year even starts you may have written on the page for the March meeting, "Board planning, Nomination Committee appointment, Spring appreciation outing, Contacts with legislators," etc. On the in-between sheets, you can make notes on board projects, committee activities, and mailings that should go to board members. This helps to assure you that big items won't be missed for lack of planning time and long range concerns won't be overlooked because of dealing with crises.

Leader's Notes—Lesson 2
Board Committees

The purpose of this lesson is to give board members insight into the theory and practice of constructive use of board committees.

A. Ask the members to read Section A before the meeting.

B. At the meeting, ask the board to take a few minutes to read the case study and the questions that follow in Section B.

Invite the board to discuss the questions. They do not need to be taken in order. You may have to remind the board that the discussion should address the contribution of the committee, not the wisdom of the board's ultimate decision in this specific case. Here are some reflections you may hear on each of the questions:

Question 1. George's position needed to be considered in the committee's deliberations; it was probably wise for the president to include him or someone who felt as he did. It was probably risky to make him the chairperson but, in the case as presented, nothing suggests that he abused the position to suppress or misrepresent the others.

Question 2. If a priest were available to the board to bring some theological understanding, it would have been good to use him either as a member of the committee or as a resource person. The theological information obtained was all second hand and that information was key to the decision.

Question 3. While the board as a whole might have reached resolution on the issue at the first board meeting—without resorting to formation of a committee—use of the committee enabled the board to improve its understanding of the issue, to make a more informed judgment, and to substantiate that judgment for its constitutents (through Sister Alice Marie's letter to the parents). Although the committee could not get together on a recommendation for the board, it did present to the board the three main options. Apparently it was still time-consuming for the board to reach its decision, but a decision probably would have been more difficult without the committee's work to build on.

Question 4. Other than providing them with access to better theological information, it is hard to see what the president might have done to be more helpful. She gave them a clear mandate, a timetable, a balanced group, and an opportunity to report back. The case does not say whether there was any contact with the chairperson by the president between board meetings. Had there been, the board president might have considered some intervention such as expanding the committee but that is risky and probably would not have helped.

C. Conclude the discussion when the time allotted is up. Ask board members to read Section C after the meeting and to fill in the chart on the second page. You may wish to suggest that ratings could be tabulated and then discussed at a future meeting of the board.

Leader's Notes—Lesson 3
POLICY DEVELOPMENT

The purpose of this lesson is to give board members an understanding of how board policy should be developed.

A. Ask the board members to read Section A before the meeting.

B. At the meeting, ask the members to read Section B silently. Then discuss the questions that follow it. It is not necessary to deal with all of the questions or to take them in order. Your own interest and/or the interests of the group will control which ones you will reflect on in the time available. Simply terminate the discussion when the time allotted for this has run out.

The questions are intended to help the group use the theory presented in the lesson to reflect on the process involved in developing policy. The discussion should sharpen their consciousness about the need for systematic treatment of policy issues.

Here are some observations on the questions:

Question 1. Parish school boards usually function well without a policy committee. On a difficult or controversial issue, an *ad hoc* committee might be helpful in arriving at a recommendation.

Question 2. Sometimes some "prophetic" confrontation is useful in helping a school community think through why the school exists and how it should deal with its students.

Question 3. It might have been helpful, for example, if the board members knew how often these situations actually occurred.

Question 4. In this actual case, the dual presentation of perspectives proved helpful in understanding the issues. To be enlightening and not dysfunctional, such presentations should be given by people who are knowledgeable, who can speak well, and who are credible spokespersons for their respective "sides" of the issue.

Question 5. In this instance, the bishop, the Family Life Bureau, and the marriage court of the diocese were consulted by the policy committee before a proposal was made.

C. When the discussion time is up, distribute Section C of the lesson and ask the members to study it after the meeting.

NOTE

If there is no system for keeping track of policies passed by the board, the principal or board officers can easily set one up. A loose leaf master book is best. Each policy is put on a separate page in the book with the date of its adoption. Policies can be numbered, e.g. by categories (C-1 is the first policy adopted that relates to curriculum, etc.) or by year (84-1 is the first policy adopted in 1984, etc.). This makes them easy to find and identify. Policies recorded only in board minutes tend to be lost after a few years!

Leader's Notes—Lesson 4
THE SCHOOL AS CATHOLIC

The purpose of this lesson is to give board members some understanding of the components that help to make a school unique as a CATHOLIC school.

A. Ask the members to read Section A before the meeting.

B. Ask two of the members to read the interview in Section B aloud, one taking the part of Ms. Applicanto (M.A.) and the other reading the parts of the spokesperson for the Search Committee (S.C.). (An alternate which would be fun is to ask two people ahead of time to role play the interview. The players need not follow the script exactly.)

Ask the group to critique the performance of Ms. Applicanto from the point of view of her ability to give leadership to the specifically Catholic qualities of the school. From what you learned about her in the interview, could you judge her adequate in this respect? (For purposes of this discussion, just ignore the question of whether or not she would be a good principal in other respects—curriculum, teacher supervision, public relations, etc.).

Following the outline of the eleven main points in Section A, here are some things you might expect to hear from the group:

1. The school's philosophy reflects its Catholic character: The candidate did show that she saw social studies in the context of a value system. She gave no indication of being familiar with Church documents which speak to this point.
2. The Catholic school communicates to its students the gospel message: She did not think to mention this but she accepted the committee's suggestion that this is part of a Catholic school. There was no indication that she saw the Catholic school as a good place to address gospel issues of justice, peace, sexual responsibility, or other key values areas. It was disappointing that she did not question the committee about the school programs and resources for religious education. (Perhaps she got that information from an earlier interview with the incumbent principal.) She was not asked about her own credentials as a religious educator; no doubt it showed on her resume.
3. The school teaches and models faith community: She did say that discipline should be tempered by affection and rapport. Other than that, nothing in her remarks suggested that she saw building faith community among either faculty or students as a responsibility of the principal.
4. The school fosters the formation of conscience: This was not addressed during the interview.
5. The school teaches its students the importance of service: This item also did not surface during the interview. There was, in fact, nothing in the interview to suggest that Ms. Applicanto was familiar with the "message—community—service" goals outlined in *To Teach as Jesus Did*.
6. The Catholic school is a prayerful place: Ms. Applicanto talked about Mass and the appropriateness of morning prayer. One did not get the impression that these were seen as part of a larger responsibility to make the school a prayerful place. Also, there was no mention of faculty prayer, an oversight perhaps.

7. The school's discipline recognizes the need for limits and yet is patient and forgiving. Ms. Applicanto spoke about the need for discipline. She saw it arising from rules which are clearly understood and fairly enforced. She left the impression that her motivation is academic ("keep order so children can learn") rather than theological (respect students as children of God and help them grow toward self-discipline).
8. A school communicates to students an appreciation of Catholic culture. The interview provided no information on this. The Search Committeee did not probe this area and the applicant volunteered nothing.
9. A Catholic school places career choices within a vocational context. Ms. Applicanto showed no understanding of what this means. She gave the impression that she perceives priests simply as people you need for Mass, and sisters as good window dressing for traditional Catholic families. Lay teachers are seen as keeping the schools going but there is no apparent sense of mission.
10. Parents are recognized as the primary educators of their children. Ms. Applicanto recognized and applauded the role of parents in selecting a principal. However, she said nothing about the role of parents as primary educators, nor of the school staff as their partners.
11. The Catholic school is an extension of the bishop as teacher. This dimension did not surface in any way during the interview.

C. Ask the members to read Section C after the meeting. Urge them to give some thought to the issues raised. If the board plans to discuss this topic further, ask them to be prepared at the next meeting. (There is an alternate Section C which may be substituted if you wish.)

Leader's Notes—Lesson 5

Long Range Planning

The purpose of this lesson is to provide the board with an understanding of long range planning and a process for undertaking it.

A. Ask the members to read Section A before the meeting.

B. At the meeting, allow a few minutes for the board members to read Section B.

Invite a brief discussion around each of the questions raised at the end of Section B. The real purpose of this exchange is for the board to consider the reasons why development of a long range plan is worth the time and energy required.

Here are some comments which you might expect to emerge from the discussion of each question:

Question 1. Advantages of long range planning:

- Reduces the number of unpleasant surprises which become problems for the school and the board.
- Provides for gradual, systematic improvement of the school program.
- Harnesses the creative vision of the board members.
- Gives the administration some direction and allows the board to hold administration accountable for school progress.
- Gives the board some "lead time" to prepare for meeting anticipated needs which will require study, engaging the interest/support of parents and parishioners, or raising additional funds.

Question 2. Risks in not planning:

- Crises occur which could have been foreseen.
- Little problems grow into big problems.
- Things get started without the resources to see them through.
- The school lacks vision. Perhaps it is able to solve immediate problems, but it never reaches beyond the here and now.

Question 3. Areas probably helped by planning:

(This question should identify some board concerns for the benefit of the planning committee, if one is formed.)

Question 4. Sources of data:

- Current enrollment; statistics on enrollment and dropout trends.
- Statistics on infant baptisms in the parish; ratio of infant baptisms to grade 1 (or kindergarten) enrollments.
- Rate of families moving in and out of the parish each year.
- School expense trends in the parish for the last five years.
- National census data for census tracts in the parish: rate of growth, family income medians.
- Diocesan information on curriculum plans.
- Rate of growth (or decline) of parish income.

Directly challenge the group: "Are we ready for long range planning? Do we see its potential value as worth the time and energy we would need to give to it?" (Note: Section C will suggest that most of the work be done by a committee.)

If the group says YES, indicate that you will schedule this on the next board agenda.

If the group says NO, you may or may not think it useful to discuss Section C.

C. If the project is endorsed and carried over to the next meeting as an item ("Consideration of a long range planning proposal"), at the next meeting you should:

1. Offer a proposal for developing the plan. (It may be the plan offered in Section C or some other outline.)
2. Appoint a chairperson and a committee, or ask for volunteers. (Clarify also whether they are authorized to expand their committee with non-board members.)
3. Determine a preliminary time-line: when will they come to the board for (a) input on needs, (b) help with making priorities, (c) reaction to a first draft? When will the project be finished?

NOTE

Lesson 7 in Series I of the *School Board Study Programs* is a study of goal setting. It deals more specifically with the process of moving from goals to objectives to programs. It does not address the more comprehensive dimension which characterizes long range planning.

Leader's Notes—Lesson 6
Board Prayer

The purpose of this lesson is to highlight the importance of prayer in the board's life and to offer some ideas for board prayer.

A. Ask the members to read Section A before the meeting.

Prepare for the prayer by getting a New Testament and selecting one of the three suggested readings. Before the meeting, recruit someone to do the reading and someone to serve as "leader." (The reader should have enough lead time to rehearse the reading if he or she desires.)

B. The president and principal should discuss the two items at the end of Section B before the meeting. How might the board respond to them?

Give some thought to the setting. Is there anything that can be done to make it more conducive to prayer? Lighting a candle or placing a Bible on the meeting table may help to enhance the prayerfulness of the setting.

At the beginning of the prayer time, call attention to Section B. Indicate to the group which part will be "Side A" and which will be "Side B." Tell them who the reader and leader will be and invite the leader to begin.

After the prayer, lead the group in a discussion of the two extra items—prayer planning assignments and a possible prayer day.

C. Ask the members to read Section C after the meeting.

NOTE

The National Catholic Educational Association (Suite 100, 1077 30th Street N.W., Washington D.C. 20007) has published a collection of prayer services, *Prayer Services for the Christian Educator* by Rev. Johannes Hofinger, S.J. Prepaid $4.45.

Leader's Notes—Lesson 7
Evaluation of the Principal

The purpose of this lesson is to familiarize board members with the purpose, potential value, and limitations of their evaluation of the principal.

It is imperative that the study leader and the principal discuss this lesson ahead of time to be sure that it is not presented in a threatening way. As designed, Section B of the lesson involves a brief, somewhat superficial actual evaluation of the principal. It was judged important to the lesson that board members actually get the feel for the sensitivity required in giving performance feedback. The information reaching the principal through this study exercise may be helpful but is totally incidental to the study goals of the lesson.

If the principal is uncomfortable with this, then accommodations should be made in the format. Options include having the members simply keep their completed material, or not doing the exercise and instead briefly discussing the questions at the end. The authors' strong preference is that the lesson should be used as designed. If the board or principal are frightened by the simple, non-threatening format of Section B, then it is unlikely that the board can successfully discharge its responsibility to give the administrator honest, constructive evaluation.

A. Ask the board members to read Section A before the meeting.

B. At the board meeting, ask the members to read Section B and put their comments for the principal in the spaces provided. Indicate what the time limit will be; 5 to 10 minutes should be adequate.

When the time is up (it is not important that they finish their comments), move on to a discussion of the questions raised at the end of Section B, particularly question 3. For the board's information, the principal should be prepared to outline briefly the regular diocesan arrangements for evaluation of principals.

Try to get resolution on the question of whether the board wants to evaluate the principal and, if so, when and with what format. (Question 3 in Section B)

Ask the board members to fold their Section B sheets and give them to the principal as informal feedback unless you have determined to handle this differently (see first paragraph above).

C. Ask the board members to read Section C at a later time.

NOTE

Individual forms, as in Section B of this lesson are actually "input" for the evaluation of the principal. The "real" evaluation takes place in a conference with the principal after the input data has been put together and summarized. Normally the board president (or some other person designated by the board to be the "evaluation coordinator") compiles the written responses of the board members into a summary that can be communicated easily and clearly to the principal. This evaluation coordinator should see that the principal receives the results of the evaluation, understands the board's comments, and (if the principal wishes) has an opportunity to respond to the board's concerns. The evaluation conference may involve only the evaluation coordinator, or the evaluation coordinator with a small board committee, or the whole board in executive session. If the whole board is not involved in the conference, it ought to be provided with a summary of the results of the evaluation. This summary can be given orally and, again, should be given in executive session and treated with great confidentiality.

Remember: the primary purposes of evaluation are the principal's professional growth and the strengthening of a healthy positive relationship between principal and school board.

Leader's Notes—Lesson 8
Board Accountability

The purpose of this lesson is to raise the consciousness of board members regarding their responsibility to be accountable to the constituents whom they serve.

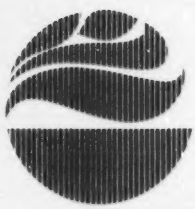
A. Ask the members of the board to read Section A before the time of the meeting.

B. At the meeting, ask the members to read the vignettes in Section B and, after each, to jot down an observation or two on how well the principles of accountability were applied in that situation. Allow about 5 minutes for people to do this. Then ask for some sharing of comments, taking one vignette at a time. Don't try to get everyone's thoughts on each item; two or three comments will do by way of sharing. Then move on to another vignette. You do not need to take them in order nor finish all of them. When the allotted time is up, simply stop.

The Section B exercise is intended to share insights and broaden perspectives on some aspects of accountability. There are not necessarily "right" and "wrong" answers or observations on each one. Here, however, are some comments which you might expect to surface.

1. Hammond is creating a problem for everyone by attempting to help in an area outside of the board's jurisdiction. He should have suggested that the parent work it out with the teacher or talk to the principal.
2. Phil appears to be using his board position to accommodate his own convenience. The real question, of course, is, "What is good for the school?"
3. Oscar has a point but, realistically, the board needs to be somewhat aggressive in taking initiatives if real communication is to take place.
4. Good accountability requires Downing to try to understand how his constituents feel on a proposal; it doesn't require him to agree. He has to vote his own best judgment on the issue.
5. Yeah, Nina. She's saying, "I'm pretty well informed on this but I'll give you the chance to persuade me."
6. Executive sessions should be rare and confined to sensitive issues—such as a discussion of the principal's contract. Normally, the conclusion is made public record; apparently in this case it was.
7. Board should give parish council whatever budget or cash status figures it wants by way of accountability. This can include totals on arrears and receivables. It does not include names of specific families. Collecting outstanding tuition is normally the principal's (or pastor's) responsibility only. Sometimes a small, discrete group of board people might follow up with parents substantially in arrears.
8. Sure. Just report the vague generality that "future tuition needs were studied." Don't get paternal about what you tell constituents but, if the risk of misunderstanding is high, communicate accordingly.

C. Ask the board members to read Section C at their convenience after the meeting.



National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA)
National Association of Boards of Education (NABE)

Copies of this publication may be obtained from
NCEA Publication Sales
Suite 100, 1077 30th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20007
(202) 293-5954

Price: $5.00

All orders less than $25.00 must be prepaid.
NCEA members may deduct 10% for any prepaid order.